

Appl. No. : 10/521,925
Filed : January 21, 2005

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the Claim Form and Claim as follows. Insertions are shown underlined while deletions are ~~struck-through~~.

1 (original): A gum base composition comprising biodegradable ingredients, wherein said biodegradable ingredients include a lactic acid polymer comprising a poly-L-lactic acid polymer and/or other lactic acid polymers having a glass transition temperature of higher than 50°C in an amount of from 5% by weight to 60% by weight, and an emulsifying plasticizer in an amount of from 1% by weight to 20% by weight.

2 (original): The gum base composition according to claim 1, wherein the content of said lactic acid polymer is from 10% by weight to less than 50% by weight.

3 (original): The gum base composition according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said lactic acid polymer has a weight average molecular weight of 50,000 to 200,000, a glass transition temperature higher than 50°C, and a crystallinity of 20% or less.

4 (currently amended): The gum base composition according to claim 1, ~~2 or 3~~, wherein said lactic acid polymer is virtually a poly-L-lactic acid polymer.

5 (currently amended): The gum base composition according to ~~any one of~~ claims 1 to 4, which contains no lactic acid polymers other than a poly-L-lactic acid polymer.

6 (currently amended): The gum base composition according to ~~any one of~~ claims 1 to 5, wherein said lactic acid polymer is a lactic polymer having a glass transition temperature of 55 to 80°C.

7 (currently amended): The gum base composition according to ~~any one of~~ claims 1 to 6, which contains an acetylated monoglyceride as said emulsifying plasticizer.

8 (original): The gum base composition according to claim 7, wherein the ratio by weight of said lactic acid polymer to the acetylated monoglyceride is from 90:10 to 80:20.

9 (currently amended): The gum base composition according to ~~any one of~~ claims 1 to 8, wherein all ingredients of said composition is biologically degradable.

10 (original): A method of producing a gum base composition comprising biodegradable ingredients, which comprises steps of heat kneading and softening a lactic acid polymer comprising a poly-L-lactic acid polymer and/or other lactic acid polymers having a glass transition temperature higher than 50°C in a pressure kneader, and homogenizing the resulting softened lactic acid polymer by adding an emulsifying plasticizer to it, said biodegradable

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ingredients containing lactic acid polymers in an amount of from 5% by weight to less than 60% by weight.

11 (original): The method of producing a gum base composition according to claim 11, wherein the temperature of said pressure kneader is 120 to 130°C.

12 (original): The method of producing a gum base composition according to claim 10 or 11, said lactic acid polymer is virtually a poly-L-lactic acid polymer.

13 (currently amended): The method of producing a gum base composition according to claim 10, ~~11 or 12~~, which contains no lactic acid polymers other than the poly-L-lactic acid polymer.

14 (currently amended): The method of producing a gum base composition according to ~~any one of claims 10 to 13~~, which contains an acetylated monoglyceride as said emulsifying plasticizer.

15 (currently amended): The method of producing a gum base composition according to ~~any one of claims 10 to 14~~, wherein the ratio by weight of said lactic acid polymer to said emulsifying plasticizer is from 90:10 to 80:20.